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853 grandmother, by name Mishidohi, who had an adult son and had had no other child since, prepared light beer and other appropriate food and succeeded in secreting milk in her own breast ; so the child was saved !

856 826 A child during these first months of its existence is regarded as a very weak creature. "I mati !" i. e. "It is nothing but water !" Hence perhaps the curious idea that a baby, just like a new born animal, is able to swim, at any rate it cannot be drowned : it floats on the water. When a woman carrying a little child on her back crosses a river and is in danger of being swept away by the stream, people shout to her from the shore : "Untie the 'ntehe' and let the baby cross. Think of yourself, the little one will follow all right." They say: "Psa yila, it is taboo that a baby should sink." Note the curious use of the word "yila" in this sentence.

3) Dentition.

856 364 351 As soon as the child has cut the two lower and upper incisors, the mother takes a white bead (tjambu) and ties it to one of the child's hairs above the forehead. This white bead is said to help the other teeth to come out normally. If this precaution were not taken, the child would not become intelligent ; he would shiver instead of smiling ; he would bring forward his lips and his tongue to prevent the air from getting into his mouth ! When all the teeth are duly cut, the bead is removed and thrown away *talen*, viz. on the *tala*. The *tala* is the ash-heap, the place behind the hut on which everyone throws ashes and dirt. It plays a great part in the customs of the Thongas and other South African Bantus.

195 The teeth (tinyo-menyo) of the children are called figuratively *hobe*. The *hobe* (pl. *tihobe*) means the grain of pounded maize which is white and very similar to a tooth. Hence the expression : "A humi hobe," "he has got out a grain of maize," employed to indicate the cutting of the teeth.

787 766 856 When a child cuts his upper teeth first, it is a bad omen. In the Northern clans and especially amongst the Ba-Pedi, it is a great taboo. At his death the child must be buried in wet soil.

595 643 in date. At her death the chief does not perform the incision : the first in date remains the first from the ritual point of view. All these facts show that, for the Thongas, there is a deeper, more mystical conception of matrimony than at first appears, when we consider their present polygamic family. For them, true, complete matrimony is the union of two persons, not of three or ten, and little wives are not much more than concubines. This feeling may very well be explained by the supposition that the race has passed through a previous monogamic phase.

II. *Consequences of polygamy.*

595 A happy consequence of the custom is that, in the primitive Bantu tribe, no disconsolate old maid is to be found. This is no doubt an advantage. I fear, however, that when monogamy sets in, this unblessed singleness will follow in its train.

But the evils of polygamy by far exceed its few advantages!

1) The first is the dreadful development of sexual passion which occurs amongst polygamists. White people who have lived in close touch with Natives in a head kraal where men have many wives, can bear testimony to the frightful excesses in which they indulge. See Annotatio 14, the observations of Dr. Liengme at Gungunyana's residence.

595 578 337 2) A second evil resulting from the custom is the domestic quarrelling which prevails in the villages of polygamists. There is a special term which indicates the peculiar jealousy of a wife towards her co-wives, *bukwele*. The prefix *bu*, in Bantu languages, designates abstract things, ideas, feelings. It is also an indication of place. *Bukwele* therefore also means the special spot between the court yards, where the wives of one man go to insult each other (rukutelana). The story of Leah and Rachel, in the book of Genesis, may give some idea of the reason of such quarrels!

595 578 Sometimes the husband amuses himself by fostering these by no means edifying feelings amongst his spouses. Tobane says : "He will say bad things (psitokoro) to one of his wives, his

1 [See pp. 519-520 in these categories of in 116-Analyst]

361 district, fifteen miles to the north, far enough from the town, where the ugly galvanised iron sheds have not yet supplanted the old typical hut. We see, in the bush, on the slope of the sandy dune, a little forest of mimosa, *minkanye*, *mikawakwa* (Strychnos). In its midst nestles a village. Thongas like to build amongst trees, to protect themselves against the terrible south winds which frequently blow across the plain, and perhaps also to shield themselves from the inquisitive eyes of people passing along the road. The little community prefers to live by itself, as it is entirely self-sufficing. This small wood is also used for other purposes. Thongas have not yet learned to build the kind of outhouse which is described in English by two letters (W. C.), and they "go outside" (humela handle) into the little copse. The air is not very pure when we cross it, so we hasten to reach the village. The accompanying plan (p. 312) represents a combination of features observed in many Thonga kraals; it is rare to find a "muti" as complete as this.

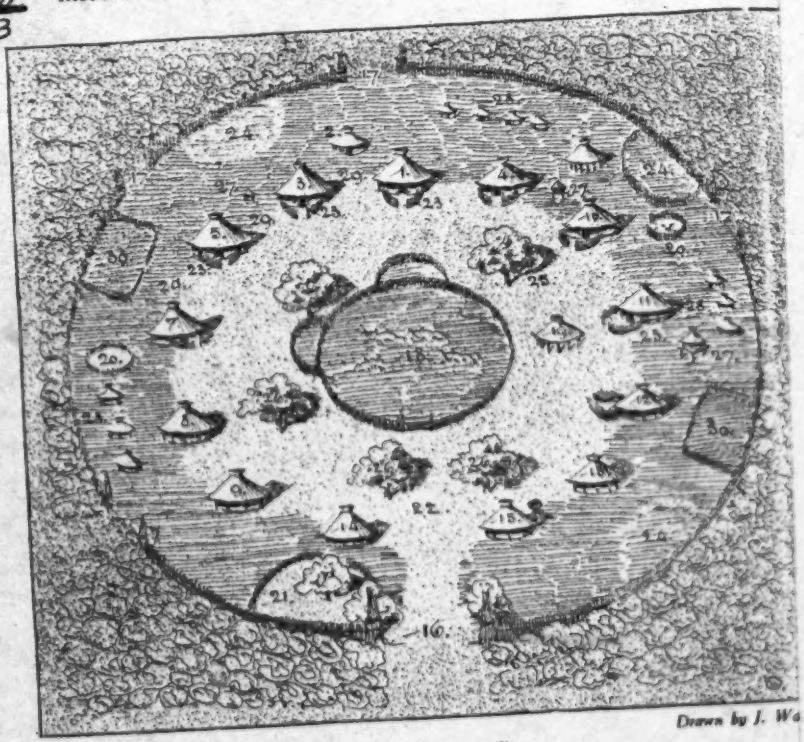
361 514

361 We first note the external circular fence *(lihlampfu)*. It is made of branches, thorny or otherwise, one and a half to two feet high, more or less rotten. It is not built as a protection against enemies. In this tribe, villages are not fortified, and, in case of war, the only resource is flight. The fence protects against spiritual enemies, witches, as we shall see later on. The path leads us straight to the main entrance (16) the *mharana*, which is three or four feet wide. But the fence is open in some other places for narrower passages called *psiruba* (17), one for about every three huts; these smaller openings lead to the wood and are used only by the inhabitants to "humela handle." Passers by, as a rule, do not enter by such back gates. They are private. On either side of the large gate is often seen a growing tree and some poles, which clearly show the entrance. This is never closed during the day. On our right, a little court with some broken pots which denote a fire-place, is the *bandla* (21), the place where the men congregate. In front of us, at the other extremity of the circle, is the headman's hut (1) or rather the hut of his principal wife. On the way to it, we cross the *hubo* (22) the central square and pass round the *ranga*, (Ro.), *shibaya*

361 712 417 351 361 351

361 / 231 / 331 / 343

or *shibala* (Dj.) (18), the oxen kraal, when the village possesses oxen. They are rare now, plague and Texas-fever having more than decimated the herds. Small enclosures at the sides



Drawn by J. W

Plan of the Thonga village.

1. Hut of the headman's first wife. 2. Headman's private hut. 3. Hut of the headman's second wife. 4. Of the third; 5. Of the fourth. 7 and 8. Huts of the two wives of the headman's younger brother. 9. Wife of third brother. 10. Wife of fourth brother. 11. Headman's son. 12. Headman's nephew. 13. Hut of a stranger. 14. Loo of the boys. 15. Nhanga of the girls. 16. Main entrance. 17. Back gates. 18. Oxen kraal. 19. Goats' kraal. 20. Pigs' kraal. 21. Square of the men (bandla). 22. Square of the village (hubo). 23. Fire-places. 24. Ash-heaps. 25. Tree of the village. 26. Shade-trees of the hubo. 27. Henhouse. 28. Storehouses. 29. Place of jealousy. 30. Tobacco-gardens.

are reserved for the calves, which are kept there when the cows go to feed during the afternoon. On the right a small hut, a conical roof supported by poles without a wall so as to let the

361 air circulate, is the goats' kraal (19). It may be placed somewhere
231 else, behind the huts, for instance ; or sometimes goats are tethered
331 every night by the leg to sticks round the hubo. The pigs are
343 never kept on the hubo, but always behind the hut : they are newcomers in the Thonga village and have hardly yet won their "droit de cité." Let us salute, as we pass by, the tree (25) which
361 is, as we shall see, the mystical stem of the village. We may perhaps
824 see, hanging upon it, a piece of clothing offered to the gods, or at its
782 base a broken pot which is the *gandjelo*, the altar of the village.
351 The gandjelo is often placed, by preference, among the poles of the main entrance on the right. The village tree, which has a ritual significance, is not to be confounded with the trees of the hubo (26), which are but *mindjuti*, shade-trees, under which the inhabitants are fond of sitting.

361 So we reach the main hut which faces the gate. This is the
595 dwelling of the headman. In hut 3 lives his second wife, in 4, his third and in 5 his fourth. 2 is called *shilubelo*. Great personages, men owning a large kraal, like to build such a hut, which is smaller than the ordinary ones and where no woman sleeps. It is the headman's own hut, where people *luba*, viz., pay their homage to him; a kind of office of the master of the village! He may sleep in it and summon his wives to come to him there. But he generally prefers to sleep in his wives' huts, one month in each, according to the polygamic custom.

361 Behind 4 and 10 is a *mhala*, a shed for the implements. It is
343 built, like the goats' kraal, without plaster walls, and is smaller
351 than a hut. There may be three or four of these in the village.
596 The headman and his wives occupy the back of the village. At the sides live his younger brothers, one, who has two wives, in 7 and 8, two others, those who have but one wife each, in 9 and in 10 respectively. In 11 lives a married son; in 12 it may be a nephew, son of the headman's sister, or a son-in-law; (see page 252). 13 might be the hut of a stranger (mulubeti), who has
361 asked permission to stay with the headman of the village, as he
574 wished to be under his protection. The case is not frequent, but
783 may occur, and in order to be received into the mystic unity of the community, this man will have to "hlamba ndjaka" (See page 153), together with all the inhabitants of the kraal.

together with all the inhabitants of the kraal. The two huts near the entrance are, on the left, the *lao*, where unmarried boys sleep (14) and on the right (15) the *nhangu* where the girls live. Often the nhangu is built behind the huts of the mothers, near the mhala ; in this way the girls are kept under more effective watch. The boys of the *lao* have to guard the door, which they close at night where it is the custom to do so. The *hubo* and the *bandla*, the squares, are generally kept quite clean.

In front of each hut is a *yard* (*ndangu* pl. *mindangu*, 23) which is also generally well swept. In the centre of each of these are some broken pots (mapseko), or pieces of hard clay taken from ant-hills (psirubu) ; this is the *fireplace (shitiko)*, where the mistress of the hut cooks her food. The fence round the yard used, as a rule, to be made of poles or even trunks of trees planted near each other and forming a circular wall. Nowadays, especially amongst the Rongas, these yards are enclosed with reeds and may be built square, a single wall fencing off as many as three or four huts. The top of this wall is sometimes crenelated. I rather think this arrangement is modern ; the circular wall of the ndangu is an old custom, as is proved by the following fact. On the day of *hloma*, when the bride's-maids and female relatives bring the bride to her husband, they not only build up the woodpile (shigiyane, see page 112), but, in the northern clans, they must also erect a new ndangu which will be called *tsandana*, and so people will know that in the yard there is a *nhlomi*, a bride, working for her mother-in-law! The ndangu is the place where women tell folk-tales of the tribe to the children and to each other, whilst they attend to their cooking, or after the evening meal.

If cleanliness prevails on the square and in the yards, the same cannot be said of the region between the huts and the fence. This is called *mahosi* or *makotini*. It is the place where old baskets and broken pots are kept. The chicken houses (*shihahlu*, 27) are built there ; these are generally little huts, with reed walls, placed on a floor of palmtree boards, supported by four poles forked at their upper extremities. The *ash-heaps* are somewhat further on (24). They are called *tala*, and play a part in certain rites, representing, as it would seem, the place of desolation and of sorrow.

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of desolation and of sorrow. (Remember Job and compare the rite of ranguka howumba, page 194.) The store houses, *paiñanto* (Ro.), *paiñati* (Dj.), 28) are close by and are built in various forms: little huts with reed walls, when intended for the meshes, with plastered walls, when built to contain ground nuts or sorgho (*mudulu* (Dj.). They are sometimes placed on a palm-tree floor resting on short poles, or they are suspended to the boughs of a

Phot. A. Rusil.

The interior of a Ronga village. (Nwalungwe).

tree. *Pigs' kraals* (*koko* 20) are to be found in the same region; sometimes they are placed even further in the forest on account of their offensive smell.

Maize leaves, heaps of *mukanye* stones, broken mortars and discarded pestles lie about behind the huts. If anyone wants to keep the place tidy, he can plant pine apples there (30), or tobacco, or Chili-pepper (*beribiri*). Pumpkin plants often creep over all this disorder. Flowers of European origin are sometimes seen on the *kubo* in the neighbourhood of Lourenco Marques, especially "everlastings", or the tropical periwinkle, Vinca rosea

247 (L.), with its white or pink blossoms, which have spread all over
331 the coast.

Having now finished our first general inspection, let us add some details about the huts and the open places in the village.

342 The hut, the construction of which we shall describe later on,
784 (Part IV) has an opening (nyangwa) of variable dimensions closed by a door. In some parts of the Gaza country it is so small that one must positively crawl to enter it. Everywhere one must at any rate stoop low (korama). As regards the *threshhold* (ntjandja wa shipfalo), it is not taboo to step over it. The headman's threshhold however is dreaded because it was treated with medicines when the hut was built, so it is taboo to sit on it; these powerful medicines might do harm and
342 even cause death. In the middle of the black clay floor is a
354 kind of raised circle, in the centre of which fire is occasionally lighted in winter on account of the cold. It is the interior *shitiko*. Cooking may be done here if it rains; glowing embers sometimes remain on it during the night and numberless babies have been burnt to death by falling into the fire while their mothers were
513 sleeping. On the left, on entering, is the sleeping place (shilawo)
853 of the wife, on the right that of the husband. They both however
841 generally spread their mats on the right and sleep beside each other. It is only during the tabooed periods (menses, nursing), that the husband must keep to his own particular side (p. 188).

353 The back of the hut is generally occupied by the big basket (ngula) in which clothing and seeds are kept. This spot is called *mfungwe*. In the roof *(lwangu)* are fixed or suspended various articles: ears of sorghum or millet, cobs to be used as seed at the next sowing, assagais, sticks and knobkerries etc., and against the walls one frequently observes rough drawings made with white clay, or, in the vicinity of towns, chromos of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, or Don Carlos, as the case may be!

361 The hubo and the bandla differ from each other. *Bandla* is
351 a Zulu word which has supplanted the Ronga term *shisiso*, viz.,
562 "the place where one finds shelter from the wind." Men light a small fire there to warm themselves. They also eat together

in the bandla, and it is strictly reserved for them. Women are allowed to penetrate into it only when they bring food. Boys must remove the ashes from the fireplace, not women. The *hubo*, on the contrary, is open to all. A shed is sometimes built on it to afford shelter during the rainy days. There are special acts always performed on the hubo : the cutting up (shindla), the slaughtering and butchery of animals and the feast of "eating the head." The head of any slaughtered ox belongs to the men, and they eat it together on the hubo (See letter C.). It is the business of the young men to keep the hubo clean, and they sometimes assemble to pull up the grass which may have grown on it. In former times it was taboo to come to the hubo with sandals. Sandals are used for hunting and must be taken off before entering the village.

Another place to which I have already alluded is the *bukwele*, the "place of jealousy," where angry co-wives insult each other! On our diagram it would be located between 5 and 4, for the wives of the headman.

The Thonga village, this closed circle of huts, is a living organism. All its members form a whole whose unity is remarkable. This common life never appears in a more striking form than at the evening meal. Let us look at our diagram. In every yard the mistress of the hut has cooked her mealies and her sauce in different pots, and, when the sun sets, she distributes the contents (phamela) in wooden or earthen plates. The largest is for the husband. He sits on the bandla with his companions, the other men of the village, and the youths waiting for the meal. All these plates, generally carried by small girls or boys, are brought from all sides to the men's gathering. All do not necessarily contain the ordinary mealies pap ; some are filled with manioc, some with sweet potatoes, etc. The men attack the first plate, all of them taking the food with their fingers. They pass on to the second and so on to the last. Meanwhile each mother has filled other smaller plates, one for the girls, one for the boys, one for herself. She has even sent to each of the other women of the village a little of her cooking, and the others have done the same to her ; so each member of the community, when

621/831 all this is done in fun. It is a great day of rejoicing for the "tinamu", who tease each other as much as they like. A man may be wanting in respect even to his great mukoñwana on these days!

621/756/357/789 6) When the huts are ready, the *fence* is built. The family doctor is summoned. The medicine man throws leaves or stones treated with his drugs along the circular line, where the headman intends to place the branches which will form the future fence of the village. This being done, the men erect the fence.

7) Special precautions are taken for *the main entrance*. Poles are erected on both sides, but before they are put in place, the doctor pours medicine into the holes in the ground and also smears the poles with it at the bottom and at the top. Mankhelu used to bury a black stone, taken out of the river, at the gate. This stone had also been smeared with drugs. "In this way, I prevent enemies from entering. Those who come to try their charms against us (ku hi ringa hi maringo) will be attacked by disease and go and die in their houses."

783/834/621 8) The building is finished. Nothing remains to be done but to *ripen the village* (wupfisa muti). Men and women assemble in two separate groups and ask each other if they have been continent during the whole "buhlapfa". If one of them confesses to having sinned, he has stolen the village from the headman; the whole work is spoiled and must be recommenced elsewhere. If all the members of the community have behaved well, they proceed to a purifying ceremony exactly similar to the *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place during the mourning ceremonies. Each couple has sexual relations according to a fixed order of precedence, one every night, and they all go to trample on the spot where the women wash their hands. The principal wife is the last to perform these rites.

621/595 9) Then comes the *drawing to himself of the village by the headman* (kokotela muti). At dawn, after the night when she has had her ritual sexual relations with the headman, his principal wife takes his shield and his assagais and stands at the main entrance, everyone being present. Outside is a thorny branch prepared for the occasion. In her martial attire, she drags this branch to the entrance and closes it.

621 1) *Social rites.* The muti, as we have seen, is a little organised
546 community having its own laws, amongst which the most important
833 seems to be the law of hierarchy. The elder brother is the undisputed
768 master and no one can supersede him. He is the owner of the village. No one must "steal it" from him. Should any one do so, the whole community would suffer and no children would be born; the life of the organism would be deeply affected. That is the reason why the headman must go first with his principal wife to have relations with her in the new village, and thus *take possession* of it or *tie* it. For this same reason, when the headman dies, the village *must* move. It is taboo to remain in it. Until the inheritance has been distributed, it is still *his home* (kwa kwe), but as soon as this ceremony has taken place, the villagers must go away, and close the door with a thorny branch. The part played by the
621 principal wife in all these ceremonies is most remarkable. It is
545 absolutely imperative that the headman should "tie the village" with her,
562 and not with another of his spouses. Should she be very old, the law
768 must be observed all the same: should she be ill, and unable to have sexual
769 relations, the village simply cannot be moved. In the Northern clans we see her taking the shield and the assagai, closing the village and "giving it" to the inmates, even performing a sacrifice and praying to the gods. It is very rare to see a woman presiding at a public religious ceremony; but she is the owner of the village as well as the headman. Moving is imperative when she dies as well as after the death of the headman. The main gate must also be closed and a new entrance made in the fence to be used during the year of mourning; in the case of her death, this opening must be made on the left of the regular *mharana*, whilst, when the husband dies, it is made on the right side; just as in the hut, when the corpse is removed for burial. (See page 138.)

351 2) *Protective rites.* These are those which concern the fence. This
789 fence does not afford material protection. The branches dry up very
621 soon and, in the case of a bush-fire, for instance, they would do more harm than good. It is a spiritual protection, a barrier of charms, of magic influences, to prevent the entrance of wizards and of all the hostile powers of the bush. We shall understand this better when treating of witchcraft superstitions. (Part VI.)

182 3) *Passage rites.* The reader will have been surprised to observe
621 amongst the ceremonies of the moving of villages, many features
829 which we have already met with in the circumcision school, or in the mourning customs. At first sight there seems to be no relation whatever between the moving of a village, the initiation of boys and the

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Phot. Dr J. de Montmollin.

Main gate of the Tembe capital.

Phot. Dr J. de Montmollin.

The "kuba," square of the Tembe capital
(The huts of the queens in the background, behind the reed wall).

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644 the men. However he was allowed to visit it Behind these huts were two passages between poles carefully arranged, one leading to the pig-sties, another to the bush. The photographer was told that this was intended to secure an exit for the queens in case of war... I suppose it had a more common and practical use in every day life! They are the *psiruba* of the queens (p. 311). In the royal kraal these back entrances are taboo.

517 644 It is on the square that the men of the neighbourhood love

343 351

Phot. D^r J. de Mestmolli

Back gate with hen-house.

to meet in the morning, when they come to pay their respects to the chief ; they sit down in groups and discuss the news of the day ; this is called, as we have seen, "ku ya bandla," "to go to the men's square." Everyone is welcome there, not only members of the reigning family, but also those of the clans conquered by the present chiefs, (as the Honwana, Mahlangwane etc., in Nondwane. Page 357). There is no lack of beer, made from maize or millet, when crops have been good, the women frequently bringing brimming jars to the capital ; the daily visits of the men are not therefore altogether disinterested.

273 517 644

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B. COURT PERSONAGES.

644 Amongst those most frequently seen at the Court, must be mentioned the Counsellors, the Favourites, the Herald and the Official Vituperator.

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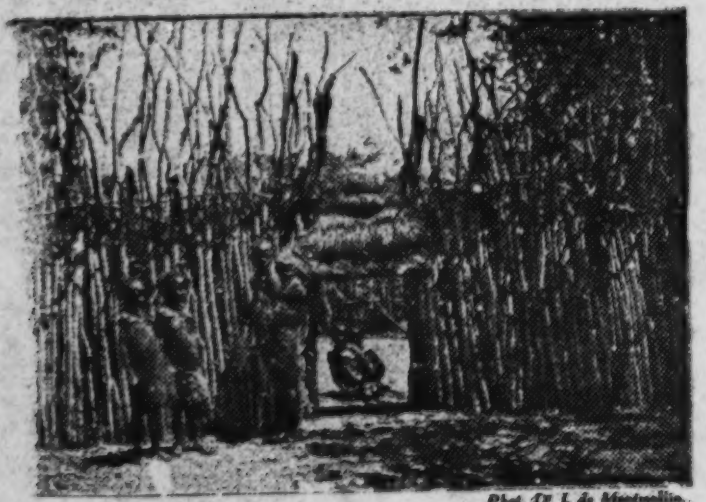

Phot. Dr J. de Mentmollin.

Black gate.

1 *The Counsellors.*

645 The Counsellors, tindjuna (1), constitute a Cabinet which assists the chief in carrying on the functions of Royalty. There are several grades of these functionaries; first the Principal Counsellors (letikulu) whose province it is to discuss and decide

(1) The Zulu word *induna* is well known and has been more or less adopted in current speech in South Africa. The Thonga form is ndjuna, pl. tindjuna. I employ both these forms indiscriminately.

245 the cause of the desolation. Planting new trees is consequently
784 a taboo! Nowadays however, this superstition has died out,
824 and one may see a great number of mango, orange, lemon (1), and pho-pho trees in Thonga fields, on the Coast as well as in Zoutpansberg.

[351] Natives do not generally fence their gardens. Stealing is
685 therefore very easy and it is no wonder that they have recourse to
719 magical means to protect themselves. Here are some of them; they are characteristic instances of Bantu magic.

The *rihehlo*. This consists of a kind of mysterious influence exerted on the thief by throwing a magical powder into his footprints or by taking a little of the earth found in these footprints and treating it with the drugs. The inhabitants of the village where the thief lives will be seized by disease; this will induce them to come to the owners of the garden to confess their fault and pay a fine. Then the magician who had furnished the drug will give them a counter-drug and they will be healed! Amongst the Pedis, the magician anoints with his drugs the stem from which a cob has been stolen. Then the thief will feel intolerable suffering in his little finger and come to the village of the people whom he has robbed crying: "I have stolen!" He pays the fine, receives in exchange the counter-drug and the pain ceases! (Spelonken)

The tinhlamalala. This is the name of the central nervules of the leaves of the Hyphaene palm tree. They are like little snakes, very slender, and flexible. To make the resemblance still greater, the owner of a field makes a knot at the extremity of the rod: this represents the head of the snake. Then he looks for the dried skin which has been cast off by a real snake; he reduces this to ashes, makes a powder with these ashes and anoints the rods. He weaves the rods together to form a kind of crown and places it on one of the mealies stems in his garden. When the thief

137 (1) The lemon tree is called mbomu (mu-mi). This seems to be a Native word and the tree also may be indigenous in the country. It grows wild on the banks of the Lower Nkomati to such an extent that there is an island in the river, some distance above Morakwen, which is called Ilha dos Limões, Lemon Island. The lemons are of large size and their rind resembles that of the orange.